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DE RUEH SB #0915/01 2830944
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3552
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000915

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/02/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: BITI BRIEFS ON NEGOTIATIONS

REF: HARARE 889

Classified By: CDA Katherine Dhanani for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) MDC-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) secretary-general and negotiator Tendai Biti briefed polecon chief October 8 and October 9 on the status of negotiations to complete a power-sharing agreement between ZANU-PF and the MDC. According to Biti, ZANU-PF is refusing to cede any of the outstanding ministries that the MDC considers crucial to a deal: home affairs, finance, local government, or foreign affairs. While Tsvangirai had previously indicated MDC would be satisfied with a deal that gave it control of home affairs and finance, Biti said the MDC was now insisting on all four ministries. Acknowledging ZANU-PF would not agree to this, Biti said the MDC now supported reopening negotiations on the allocation of all ministries with mediation from SADC and the AU. END SUMMARY.

Recent Negotiations

¶2. (C) Biti said that Mugabe and Tsvangirai met on October 4 but, as in their October 1 meeting (Ref), failed to make headway. Tsvangirai continued to insist on MDC control of home affairs and finance; Mugabe refused.

¶3. (C) On October 7, MDC-T negotiators Biti and Elton Mangoma met with ZANU-PF negotiators Patrick Chinamasa and Nicholas Goche. According to Biti, the ZANU-PF negotiators were "condescending" and vowed that ZANU-PF would not cede any of the four outstanding ministries to the MDC.

¶4. (C) A follow-up meeting of the negotiators was held on October 8, this time with the addition of MDC-Mutambara (MDC-M) negotiators Welshman Ncube and Priscilla

Misihairabwi. Again, according to Biti, no progress was made. Another meeting is scheduled for today with principals Mugabe, Tsvangirai, and Mutambara and their negotiating teams.

15. (C) Biti told us he and others would not be satisfied with a deal that gave the MDC home affairs and finance, and Tsvangirai would have a difficult time selling this to the MDC national council. At a minimum, he believed the MDC should receive all the outstanding ministries. To this end, he was advocating that negotiations be reopened on allocation of all 31 ministries.

Seeking SADC and AU help

16. (C) According to Biti, Tsvangirai had written former South African president Thabo Mbeki seeking his reengagement as a mediator. Mbeki wrote back requesting the MDC list points of disagreement with ZANU-PF and areas in which he could be helpful. Biti interpreted this as a "bureaucratic" response signaling that Mbeki was not eager to insert himself into the process.

17. (C) Biti was pessimistic that ZANU-PF would compromise without AU and SADC involvement. He traveled to Dar Es Salaam last weekend to speak with Tanzanian president Kikwete who, according to Biti, was sympathetic to the MDC position and highly critical of Mugabe. Biti said that newly-elected speaker of the House of Assembly Lovemore Moyo had met with

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Botswanan president Khama who took a similar position. Finally, MDC-T vice president Thokozani Khupe had met with South African president Motlanthe and ANC president Jacob Zuma. Zuma, in particular, as related to Biti by Khupe, was supportive of the MDC. Biti added that Tsvangirai was planning a trip next week to Botswana and possibly South Africa. (NOTE: Despite GOZ promises, Tsvangirai still has not received his passport and will be traveling on a travel document. END NOTE.)

18. (C) Biti believed the impasse could be resolved only with SADC and AU intervention. He viewed MDC participation in the current negotiations as a way of demonstrating to the regional and international communities that ZANU-PF was stonewalling and acting in bad faith.

COMMENT

19. (C) ZANU-PF's bad faith in negotiations is evidence that it sees MDC inclusion in government as requisite to international reengagement and economic recovery, but wants to maintain the real power in a new government. Its unwillingness to support a genuine power-sharing arrangement bodes poorly for the functioning of a government if and when a final agreement is concluded. END COMMENT.
DHANANI